

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A hard boiled candy composition comprising:

- (a) a confectionery base comprised of a mixture of at least one sugar and at least one carbohydrate bulking agent which is kept in an amorphous or glassy condition;
- (b) at least one botanical having an unpleasant mouthfeel; and,
- (c) an amount of from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight of said composition of one or more partially hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fats, said amount being effective ~~alone~~ to suppress said unpleasant mouthfeel of said botanical.

Claim 2 (original): The candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the botanical is Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginko Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian or Ephedra.

Claim 3 (original): The candy composition according to claim 2 wherein the botanical is Echnicacea.

Claim 4 (original): The candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is cottonseed, soybean, peanut, palm, sunflower seed or corn oil, and the saturated fat is palm kernel oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter or butter.

Claim 5 (original): The candy composition according to claim 4 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is partially hydrogenated

cottonseed oil, palm kernel oil or butter or a mixture thereof.

Claim 6 (original): The candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.5% to 3.5%.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The candy composition according to claim ~~7~~ 1 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.75% to 3.0%.

Claim 8 (original): The candy composition according to claim 1 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil to the botanical is from 1.0/0.6 to 1.0/0.15.

Claim 9 (original): The candy composition according to claim 8 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated oil to the botanical is from 1.0/0.6 to 1.0/0.15.

Claim 10-27 (withdrawn):

Claim 28: (currently amended): A method for suppressing the unpleasant mouthfeel of a hard boiled candy composition which contains a botanical having an unpleasant mouthfeel, which comprises:

(a) providing a confectionery base comprised of a mixture of at least one sugar and at least one carbohydrate bulking agent which is kept in an amorphous or glassy condition and a botanical having an unpleasant mouthfeel, and,

(b) adding thereto from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight of said composition of one or more partially hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fats said amount being effective ~~alone~~ to suppress said unpleasant mouthfeel of said botanical.

Claim 29 (original): The method according to claim 28 wherein the botanical is Echinacea, Siberian Ginseng, Ginko Biloba, Kola Nut, Goldenseal, Golo Kola, Schizandra, Elderberry, St. Johns Wort, Valerian or Ephedra.

Claim 30 (original): The method according to claim 29 wherein the botanical is Echinacea.

Claim 31 (original): The method according to claim 28 wherein the partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is cottonseed, soybean, peanut, palm, sunflower seed or corn oil, and the saturated fat is palm kernel oil, coconut oil, cocoa butter, or butter or mixtures thereof.

Claim 32 (original): The method according to claim 31 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is partially cottonseed oil, palm kernel oil or butter or a mixture thereof.

Claim 33 (original): The method according to claim 28 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.5% to 3.5%.

Claim 34 (original): The method according to claim 33 wherein the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is present at 0.75% to 3.0%.

Claim 35 (original): The method according to claim 28 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil to the botanical is from about 1/1 to about 1/0.1.

Claim 36 (original): The method according to claim 35 wherein the ratio of the saturated fat or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil to the botanical is from 1.0/0.6 to 1.0/0.15.

Claims 37 – 45 (canceled without prejudice).

Claim 46-54 (withdrawn).

Claim 55 (currently amended): A hard boiled candy composition comprising:

(a) a confectionery base comprised of a mixture of at least one sugar and at least one carbohydrate bulking agent which is kept in an amorphous or glassy condition;

(b) at least one botanical having an unpleasant mouthfeel; and

(c) an unpleasant mouthfeel suppressing agent consisting essentially of from about 0.5% to about 5.0% by weight of said composition of one or more partially hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fats, said amount being effective ~~alone~~ to suppress said unpleasant mouthfeel of said botanical.